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C O N F I D E N T I A L OTTAWA 001539

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/29/2013

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [CA](#)

SUBJECT: MISSILE DEFENSE: CANADA ANNOUNCES DECISION TO
ENTER NEGOTIATIONS

REF: OTTAWA 1437 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Brian Flora,
Reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

THIS IS AN ACTION REQUEST - SEE PARA 6.

[11.](#) (C) SUMMARY AND COMMENT: The Canadian Government announced on May 29 that it has decided to enter into discussions with the U.S. on missile defense participation. This decision represents a dramatic shift in Canadian policy on missile defense, which was generally viewed in a negative light here prior to 2002 because of arms control concerns. Over the past several months, Defense Minister McCallum and Foreign Minister Graham were able to convince Prime Minister Chretien and most of the Liberal Party caucus that participation in missile defense would be in Canada's national interest. Their strongest argument was that since the U.S. was proceeding with missile defense deployment, Canada would be jeopardizing its defense relationship with us, in particular NORAD, if it did not join. Now that Canada has taken the plunge, we need to work with them to reach an agreement that keeps our defense partnership on track. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

[12.](#) (U) Canadian Defense Minister McCallum announced on May 29 that the GoC has decided to enter into discussions with the U.S. on Canadian participation in missile defense. McCallum said this decision was motivated by a desire to protect Canadian lives and to preserve NORAD's role in the defense of North America. He specifically noted that Canada would like the North American missile defense mission to be assigned to NORAD, vice NORTHCOM. McCallum also reiterated Canada's opposition to weaponization of space, and said that any agreement on Canadian participation in missile defense would still have to be blessed by Cabinet.

[13.](#) (C) Foreign Affairs (DFAIT) and National Defense (DND) contacts told us that the decision to enter missile defense negotiations was taken at the May 26 Cabinet meeting, but that Prime Minister Chretien had planned to announce the decision during his ongoing visit to Europe. The government changed plans because the opposition Canadian Alliance Party introduced a motion in the House of Commons on May 29 affirming its support for NORAD as a counter to ballistic missile threats. The GoC decided to go ahead and announce its decision in response to the Canadian Alliance motion. The announcement was roundly criticized by Bloc Quebecois and New Democratic Party MPs. (COMMENT: We anticipate sniping from hardcore Liberal Party opponents as well, including Heritage Minister and Liberal leadership candidate Sheila Copps. END COMMENT)

[14.](#) (C) Ron Hoffmann, DFAIT Director for Defense and Security Policy, stressed to us that NORAD's role in missile defense was the key issue in the Cabinet debate over entering negotiations. Several Cabinet officials argued that the future of Canada's role in North American defense would be determined by NORAD's involvement in the missile defense system. Other issues included territorial coverage, industrial cooperation, and weaponization of space. Hoffmann told us that the GoC recognizes the U.S. is not going to agree to any limits on future direction of the missile defense system, and that the GoC would like to "park" the space weaponization issue and not have it become a sticking point in negotiations. He likened this issue to Canada's position on nuclear disarmament, which it supports while also subscribing to a NATO nuclear strategy.

[15.](#) (C) Hoffmann told us that the GoC would like to begin negotiations as soon as possible. As a preliminary step, Assistant Deputy Ministers Jim Wright (DFAIT) and Ken Calder (DND) would like to visit Washington and lay out Canada's decision and negotiating mandate for senior officials at State and Defense. Hoffmann proposed this visit taking place on June 5 or 6. The GoC would then propose to send its full negotiating team to Washington on June 13 or 17 to begin discussions. We cautioned that the U.S. side might need more time before starting talks. Hoffmann urged us to at least agree to an early visit by Wright and Calder so that they could lay out the GoC approach.

[16.](#) (C) ACTION REQUEST: Please advise on availability of U.S. officials for meetings with Wright and Calder.
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